

Wagon Wheels Adapted for Texts

Developed by educators in the field and revised by Connie Parrish and Susan Taylor, 2012.

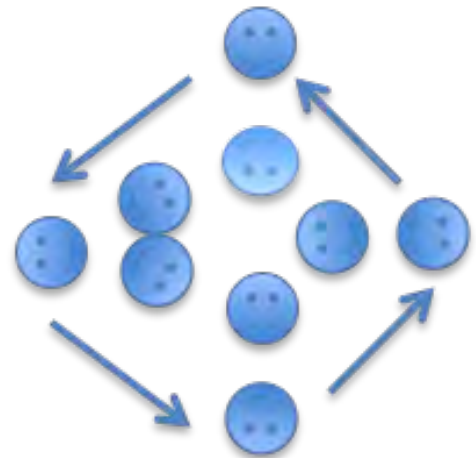
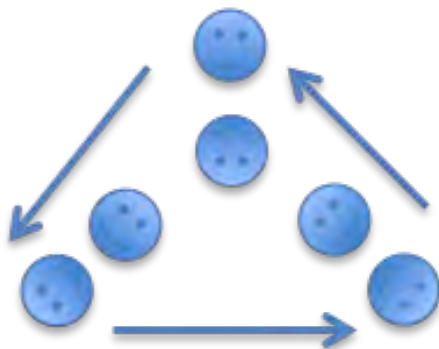
Purpose

To deepen understanding of a text; to explore implications for participants' work

Note: Wagon Wheel structure may also be used to brainstorm an issue or topic. See Wagon Wheels Brainstorm.

Set-Up

- Four chairs back-to-back at the hub of the wheel and 4 chairs on the outer circle facing the chairs at the hub.
- Since this process is done in a “knee-to-knee” format without tables, it’s helpful for participants to bring reflection journals to lean against. They also bring their texts, something to write with, and perhaps some sticky notes for jotting down ideas.
- Each Wagon Wheel optimally includes 6 or 8 participants. If you have an uneven number you can hook together 2 participants on the wheel hub, which then becomes a discussion triad, rather than a pair. See examples below:



Procedural Notes

- The people on the outside of the wheel will be moving one seat to the left (or right) at each rotation; the people seated at the hub remain in their seats.
- Explain that they will be working on one guiding question or piece of text with each partner for approximately five minutes – i.e., they will work with four different partners during the activity – trying to amplify their understandings of the text and any implications from the text for their work.
- At the end of each rotation, ask each participant sitting on the outside of the wheel to rotate one seat to the left. After they settle down, give them the next question/quotation/topic and ask them to once again amplify and extend their understandings.

Debrief

Some ideas for structuring discussion:

- You might offer guiding questions for rounds (i.e., What was confirmed or confusing in the text? What might you consider using from the text?)
- You might identify salient quotations or direct participants to particular places in the text, one per round. At the beginning of a round, you would direct participants to a page number and quote, read it aloud, and then post it as a reminder. Participants turn to that place, read the quote, think about and then discuss it.
- It's important to provide a moment or two at the beginning of each round during which participants can go back into the text. This deepens the talk.